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 FM SECRETARY OF STATE
 TO RUEERS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERA PRIORITY 1227
 RUEMCC/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 1211
 RUEPBB/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY 4027
 RUEPAB/AMEMBASSY BUEENAREST PRIORITY 4231
 RUEPAC/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 3719
 RUEPJM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 1172
 RUEPJD/AMEMBASSY DACC PRIORITY 2492
 RUEPJT/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY 4925
 RUEPFA/AMEMBASSY JEDDA PRIORITY 1738
 RUEPAB/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1645
 RUEPFC/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY 5257
 RUEPFO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 9054
 RUEPML/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 1332
 RUEPAD/USINT BAGDAD PRIORITY 2336
 RUEPJP/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 3265
 RUEPBD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 2571
 RUEPJT/AMEMBASSY PAKISTAN PRIORITY 2772
 RUEPNA/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 3259
 INFO RUEPBL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 2223
 RUEPFO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 7954
 RUEPBT/USMISSION USN NEW YORK 6143
 RUEPDA/ CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII 4322
 BT
 S E C R E T SECTION 21 OF 22 STATE 273949/21

LIMDIS

P.O. 12355: 205, 13/17/85 (COON, JANE A.), HBA

TAGS: PPR, MILI, AF, TP

SUBJECT: DIALOGUE ON AFGHANISTAN

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. INP HAS PREPARED FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS ON SOVIET-
 AFGHAN RELATIONS AND SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN
 FROM WHICH ACTION ADDRESSEES MAY AT THEIR DISCRETION DRAW
 IN CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS WITH HOST GOVERNMENTS ON
 SOVIET INTENTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN. THESE POINTS SUPPLEMENT
 INFORMATION PROVIDED PREVIOUSLY IN STATE 23742, DATED
 APRIL 19, 1979.

3. DURING THE SIX MONTHS PRECEDING THE SEPTEMBER 14-16 AMIN TAKEOVER, MOSCOW EMPLOYED A SERIES OF POLITICAL TACTICS TO DEAL WITH A DETERIORATING SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN:

(A) IT FIRST TRIED TO PERSUADE THE TARAKI-AMIN REGIME TO BROADEN ITS BASE OF SUPPORT AND TO MODERATE ITS POLICIES. THIS ADVICE WENT LARGELY UNHEEDED.

(B) FOR A WHILE THEREAFTER, MOSCOW DISTANCED ITSELF SOMEWHAT FROM AMIN AND TARAKI AS INDIVIDUALS, WHILE CONTINUING PUBLICLY TO SUPPORT THE AFGHAN "REVOLUTION."

(C) HOWEVER, MOSCOW EVENTUALLY SEEMS TO HAVE CONCLUDED (ABOUT AUGUST) THAT THERE WAS NO VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO THE TARAKI/AMIN REGIME (ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION THAT MOSCOW INTENDED TO BACK THE MORE MODERATE TARAKI AGAINST AMIN).

AT ANY RATE, WHEN TARAKI PASSED THROUGH MOSCOW ON HIS WAY HOME FROM THE HAVANA NAM SUMMIT IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, HIS MEETING WITH SPOKOINYI WAS GIVEN EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY IN A PARTY-TO-PARTY CONTEXT THAT CAME CLOSER THAN EVER BEFORE TO RECOGNIZING THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN (PDPA) AS A COMMUNIST PARTY.

4. DURING THE SAME SIX-MONTH PERIOD, SOVIET POLITICAL EFFORTS WERE SUPPLEMENTED BY MILITARY MOVES:

-- THE NUMBER OF SOVIET MILITARY PERSONNEL INCREASED TO ABOUT 1,500 BY 4. 70, INCLUDING ADVISERS AND MILITARY SUPPORT PERSONNEL, SOME OF WHOM ARE ATTACHED DOWN TO THE BATTALION LEVEL IN THE AFGHAN MILITARY.

-- INCREASINGLY, SOVIET ADVISERS HAVE TAKEN OVER ROLES THAT WOULD NORMALLY BE ADVISORY ONLY, E.G. IN COMMAND FUNCTIONS AND ESPECIALLY IN SOME COMBAT FUNCTIONS AS WELL. WE HAVE, HOWEVER, NO RELIABLE INDICATION THAT SOVIET FORCES HAVE PARTICIPATED IN COMBAT AGAINST INSURGENTS AS UNITS.

-- SOVIET UNWILLINGNESS ABOUT THE AFGHAN SECURITY SITUATION IN THE FACE OF THE INSURGENCY AND ARMY MUTINIES LED THE SOVIETS TO TAKE ON SOME DIRECT SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES, E.G. AT BAKHRAH AIR BASE WHERE THERE IS A FORCE OF 423 SOVIETS.

5. AMIN'S SEPTEMBER 14-16 SEIZURE OF POWER BY ALL INDICATIONS OCCURRED WITHOUT ADVANCE WARNING TO MOSCOW.

BUT DETAILS OF WHAT HAPPENED REMAIN UNCLEAR. SOVIET AMBASSADOR PUZANOV APPARENTLY KEPT IN TOUCH WITH EVENTS AS THEY UNFOLDED.

-- THERE WAS A BRIEF PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY IN MOSCOW, E.G. WHEN SOVIET MEDIA CONTINUED TO PUBLICIZE TARAKI'S LEADERSHIP AFTER HE HAD ALREADY BEEN OVERTHROWN. MOSCOW'S INITIAL MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS TO AMIN ON HIS "REVOLUTION" TO TARAKI'S PRESS WAS NON-COMMITTAL, BUT SINCE THEN SOVIET MEDIA HAS INDICATED SUPPORT FOR THE NEW REGIME.

-- IT IS LIKELY THAT SOVIET ADVICE WAS REFLECTED IN AMIN'S INITIAL SEPTEMBER 17 SPEECH AND IN SOME OF HIS